



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Department of Health Educates About Booster Seats During Child Passenger Safety Month

Bismarck, N.D. – During Child Passenger Safety Month in February, North Dakota elementary school children and their parents will be receiving life-saving information about child passenger safety best practices through their local law enforcement and public health agencies. The students will also be receiving information about the “Ready? Safe? Go!” campaign. This campaign teaches children to ask themselves if they are traveling in the safest way possible – buckled up correctly in the back seat.

“One thing that we want to emphasize is the length of time a child needs to ride in a booster seat,” said Dawn Mayer with the North Dakota Department of Health’s Child Passenger Safety Program. “We see a lot of children prematurely using seat belts. We often get questions from parents about the use of booster seats and when to transition between car seats, booster seats, and seat belts. Because of that, we’ve put together these top 10 tips for boosters.”

The North Dakota Department of Health would like to share the following best practices for how elementary children should be buckled in vehicles:

- 1. Why use a booster seat?** Booster seats reduce the injury risk to children by 59 percent compared to seat belts alone.
- 2. What is a booster?** A booster is not car seat. A booster seat raises and positions a child so the lap and shoulder belt fit correctly. A booster keeps the lap belt from causing injury to the child’s abdomen and keeps the shoulder belt in place to give the child upper body protection. In the event of a crash, an adult seat belt that does not fit a child properly can actually cause injury rather than prevent it because it doesn’t fit over the strong parts of the child’s body.
- 3. What is a high back booster?** A high back booster seat is a belt positioning device that offers head protection to a child if the vehicle does not offer it (a head restraint). A high back also offers shoulder belt positioning options and even sometimes offers more side-impact head protection.

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4. What is a backless booster? A backless booster is a seat belt positioning device without a back. It is most commonly used in vehicles that already have head restraints built into the vehicle seat. Some backless boosters also offer shoulder positioning options as well.

5. What age should you start using a booster? When a child has outgrown his or her car seat with a harness system, you can start using a booster seat. Children should be at least 40 pounds and at least 4 years old before using a booster seat.

6. What age can a child come out of a booster? Kids are usually tall enough to come out of a booster between the ages of 8 to 12 years.

7. What size should a child be to stop using a booster? Keep kids in boosters until they are at least 4'9" tall or until the seat belt fit is correct on a child's body. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, on average a child reaches the height of 4'9" tall between the ages of 10 to 11 years old.

8. Where should you use a booster? Boosters require the use of both lap and shoulder belts. The back seat is the safest place to ride in a vehicle.

9. How much are booster seats? Boosters are very inexpensive and cost as low as \$10 to \$100 or more.

10. What is the best booster seat to buy? Fortunately there are many boosters to choose from on the market. The best booster to buy is the one that fits your child and your car, and is one you will use correctly every time you travel.

For more information about Child Passenger Safety Month, contact Dawn Mayer, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4536.

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